

A Jack and His Queen

HARRY L. NEWTON'S One-Act Comedy Sketches, Monologues and Dramatic Episodes

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M. WITMARK & SONS,

Witmark Building

144-146 West 37th Street, New York

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A Jack and His Queen

A Comedietta in One Act

By

HARRY L. NEWTON

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COSTUMES.

JACK WINDSOR—Afternoon walking suit.

FLORA MASON—Afternoon walking dress, hat, furs, etc.

HALL BOY—Uniform.

PROPERTIES.

Books and magazines on table. Photograph of Flora. Envelope containing a visiting card for Hall Boy. Tray with lunch, glasses, knives, and forks; bottle of wine for Hall Boy. Cigarette case with cigarettes for Jack.

TMP96-007192

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no 1

CHARACTERS:

JACK WINDSOR—*A Young Bachelor.*

FLORA MASON—*His Fiancée and Queen of His Heart.*

A HALL BOY.

LOCALITY.—Jack Windsor's apartments.

TIME.—An afternoon this year.

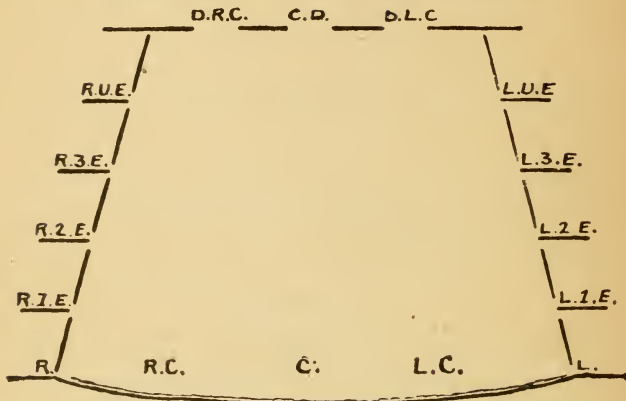
SYNOPSIS:

Jack Windsor, a young bachelor, has recently returned from an eight years' tour of the world, and, having sown his wild oats, decides to settle down by marrying his fiancée, Flora Mason, whom he has not seen since she was a young Miss with her hair in pig-tails.

Flora pays a surreptitious visit to Jack's apartments, and while there discovers a visiting card bearing the name of "Tottie Twinkletoes," a dancer who, it has been previously announced, will call upon Jack that very afternoon.

Jack discovers Flora in his rooms and mistakes her for Tottie. Flora keeps up the deception, and some very smart dialogue ensues, at the end of which peace and mutual understanding are fully established.

DIAGRAM OF STAGE.



AUDIENCE.

- L. 1. E.—Left first entrance.
- R. 1. E.—Right first entrance.
- L. U. E.—Left upper entrance.
- C.—Centre of stage.
- R. C.—Right centre of stage.
- L. C.—Left centre of stage.
- C. D.—Centre door.
- D. R. C.—Door right centre.
- D. L. C.—Door left centre.

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STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right hand; L., left hand; C., centre of stage.

SCENE.—Bachelor "den" in Jack Windsor's apartments. Piano L. Table, on which are books and magazines, etc., R. C. Fireplace with mantelpiece and looking-glass above it R. On mantel is a photograph of a young girl. Telephone on table. Stage to be set as handsomely as circumstances will permit. Door leading to street L. 3 E. At rise of the curtain Jack is discovered in comfortable chair near the fire, with his feet elevated on table, and smoking a cigarette.

JACK—George! but it's good to be home again after knocking about the continent for eight years. I tell you, when a fellow gets to be my age he's good and willing to settle down, and that's what I'm going to do pretty soon—settle down. No more warm birds and cold bottles for yours truly. I cut it all out from now on. I wonder what Flora looks like, anyway—now. Last time I saw her she was in short skirts, had two fetching pig-tails, and some freckles. (*Eyes fall on photo on mantel.*) Hello,

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there she is now! (*Gets up, goes to mantel and gazes at photo.*) Howdy-do, Mrs. Windsor-soon-to-be. Take a good look at your future husband. You'll probably see more of me now than *after* our marriage. But, no, that won't be so. I'm going to be just the nicest thing in well-behaved husbands to be found. (*Throws cigarette into grate.*) I think I'll quit smoking right now—at least that particular cigarette. (*Produces cigarette case, selects and lights cigarette; puffs reflectively.*) She was a nice girl, all right, and—

(HALL BOY enters with envelope containing card from L.)

JACK—Hello! What's this? (*Opens envelope, takes card, and reads card aloud*): "Tottie Twinkle-toes." Huh! What's this, anyway? Tottie Twinkletoes! Where is the lady?

BOY—There ain't no lady. An A. D. T. breezed in here with it. He sez I wuz to beat it upstairs and give it to youse. Is that all? (*Holds out his hand.*)

JACK—Yes.

BOY (*thrusting out hand prominently*)—Beg pardon, sir; is that all?

JACK—I hope it is. One strange lady is quite enough.

BOY—Come on, kick in, kick in! I've got a widowed father and three kids to support.

JACK (*handing him coin*)—There; on your way!

BOY—Yes, sir; thank you, sir. (*Exit L.*)

JACK (*looking at card in his hand in puzzled manner*)—Well, who—what— Say, I wonder who

belongs to this? Great title—"Tottie Twinkletoes." Sounds like an actorine, doesn't it? But I don't know her. Can't say I care to. (*Telephone bell rings.*) Hello, I wonder who that is? Some busy day for yours truly. (*Goes to phone, takes down receiver, and calls*): Hello, hello! Yes, this is Pink—Pink I said, not punk. Pink—Pink! Say, what's the matter with you, are you color blind? Pink 23. Yes, this is—what's that? Date? Date? I don't—Peach? See here—Pair? What's that—pair? You say you have a date for me and a peach? Hello—say, what do you think this is, a fruit store? What's that you say? Bird? Lark? (*Laughs aside.*) Now he thinks he's got a bird store. Oh, is that you, Bill? Say, you had me going. I thought you were ringing up a department store. Yes—Oh, I had a great time! Yes, kind of rough on the ocean. A little rough on my bank roll? Well, rather! Say, Bill, you ain't living 'less you go to Paris. You just ought to see some of those—but no more for mine. I'm the regular little Sunday school scholar from now on. Card? What's that? Tottie Twinkletoes? (*Picks up card from table.*) Yes, sure; kid just brought it. Say, what's the matter with her, and what's the trouble with you? No, I'm reformed—cross my heart; nothing stirring, Bill, not a leaf. I tell you I don't want to meet her! Coming? Right away? Well, see here, she's not. I tell you—Hello, hello, Bill, for Heaven's sake! (*Hangs up receiver.*) He's gone. Well, what do you think of that? Ain't it awful, Mabel? I'll tell you now, no Tottie Twinkletoes

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gets in here this afternoon. No, siree! (*He throws card on table R., and then goes over to piano and sits down, picks up song and reads title aloud.*) That's just the way I feel. (*Introduces song. At conclusion of same exits R.*)

(*A knock at door L.*)

FLORA (*After a slight pause, peeps in*)—May a body come in? Why, the place is deserted! (*Coming down toward table, laughing.*) Put not thy faith in elevator boys. He told me, "I sure would" find Mr. Windsor at home. (*Goes to fire and warms her hands.*) Dear old Jack! Won't he be surprised to see me! It's eight long years since we—we became engaged. (*Sighs.*) My, but that's a long time to wear a man's name. (*She has turned to table and is turning over books, etc., when she picks up card and reads absent-mindedly*): "Tottie Twinkletoes"—what a queer name! (*Laughs, but breaks off suddenly.*) But I wonder who this Twinkletoes person is? (*Looks at card again.*) Her card certainly occupies a very prominent place on my Jack's table. But, pshaw! my Jack wouldn't— (*Going toward L.*)

(*Enter JACK from R. He starts back in surprise on seeing FLORA.*)

JACK—Oh, Miss Twinkletoes! So you came, anyway?

FLORA (*Confused*)—Yes, I—who— (*Looks again at card.*)

JACK (*Aside*)—Gee, she's peach preserves! Bill sure has taste, all right. (*Looks carefully around room, then goes to centre door and draws curtains;*

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still aside) Won't do any harm to speak to her, anyway. (*To her*) What will you have—I mean, have a seat. Take off your—hat.

FLORA—Why, really, Mr. Windsor, I didn't—

JACK—Oh, that's all O. K. Bill just called up and said you'd be over.

FLORA—Oh, he did, did he?

JACK—Surest thing you know. I say, Miss Twinkletoes, do you— (*Busies himself in placing a chair by the table.*)

FLORA (*Aside*)—Oh, so I'm Miss Twinkletoes! Here's my chance to have a little fun—and find out what my Jack is like. (*To him*) So Bill said I was coming, did he? Isn't Bill a bully guy? Honest, I think he's a four-time winner.

JACK (*Surprised at her language*)—Yes—yes, he is. But tell me— Never mind. Wait till you know *me* better. (*Aside*) Not only a swell looker, but all to the spring flowers on her monologue stunt. It's me to get cozy with her. (*To her*) Oh, is that chair comfortable?

FLORA (*Meanwhile has seated herself in careless fashion*)—Believe me, party, it is.

JACK—Glad to hear it. Won't you take off your coat?

FLORA—Guess not, party. Your fiancée may come piking along any moment, and I need all the hair I've got. Say, do you know you're a whole lot different from what I expected? Bill says you was stand-offish—that you were engaged for the wedding march. 'Tis true?

JACK—Oh, not exactly engaged. Just a mere ar-

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rangement. You know the way these things are settled. But let's talk about yourself. Are you an actress?

FLORA—As to that, the jury's still out. I don't care to play my own trombone solo, but when I pull out all the emotional stops and start chasing Camille around the parlor, Leslie Carter begins to cancel time forthwith. And my notices! My dear, they're simply immense! Why, the man on the Jayville Junction *Journal* sez: "Her comedy is tragedy, and her tragedy is comedy." Say, you can't get 'em any stronger than *that*! If it wasn't for a personal tiff with Abe Erlanger I'd be on Broadway to-day. At that, I'm hidin' from Henry W. Savage. Why, Dillingham sez to me: "Any time, Miss Twinkletoes, you want a production a *star* like you *should* have, come to me."

JACK—Are you playing emotional rôles now?

FLORA—I should hope not! I'm a merry villager with Sam Bernard, with a line after the opening chorus. I step out and say: "Oh, girls, here comes the king!" Believe me, I get a hand just as soon as the king comes on.

JACK—Have you a song in the show?

FLORA—With the prima donna green with jealousy as a crème-de-menthe? I guess not! You know, party, I'm the last one to start any anvil chorus, but all that skirt knows about singing she snatches from a hurdy-gurdy without hurting the works; and when it comes to dancing, a switch engine could give her the double-cross. Why, she ought to be home in a rocking-chair.

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JACK—Oh, I suppose she had; but do you know, you're just the style of girl I like. Breezy, right up to the minute—a real good pal. What would you say to a small bottle?

FLORA—Few words, indeed; but give me a knockdown to a quart of wealthy water and I'll put you up to a line of chatter that's got it on any doll on the Big Light Alley. White Seal, party, for mine.

JACK (*Rings call bell*)—How's your appetite? Will you have a bird?

FLORA—Nix for the bird talk. But I could do a lovely specialty with an order of ham and eggs, if I wasn't afraid of givin' the comic papers the duplex-cross. Say, where do you Johns get the idea us actresses live on birds? Every time you lay orbs on us you make a noise like a squab. It's poor talk, believe me, it is. (*Enter Boy L.*)

JACK (*To Boy*)—Bring the luncheon ordered for this afternoon, and a couple of bottles in a bucket.

FLORA—Don't be short. Make it a full house in a wash tub, sonny.

BOY—All right. (*Exit.*)

JACK—You must have inherited your appetite for ham and eggs from Bill—he always takes them.

FLORA (*Surveying room*)—Gee, you've got this room fixed up to give Dave Belasco the Willies. I shouldn't think you'd want to chuck all this glad stuff just to ask some dame to help pick out a janitor with you.

JACK—Say, what does all that mean in plain American?

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FLORA—Why, to do the feather-the-nest act; boom the orange blossom industry; get married, of course. Gee, that's simple!

JACK (*Thoughtfully*)—You know, I've thought of that same thing myself, and I'm thinking that this is a mighty comfortable way to live, after all.

FLORA (*Aside in natural voice*)—Oh, you do, do you? Think I'll gather some more evidence against you, Mr. Jack. (*To him*) Yep, you're right there, party. Marriage is all right in the \$1.18 novels, but when you start acting it out it's some different. How'd you like to tend the furnace, bring in the milk, beat carpets, wash dishes, pay rent and a half million other things? Nix, and likewise nay, for little Tottie!

JACK—I guess you're right, little girl. (*Goes over to piano.*) I certainly wish I could get out of this engagement thing. (*Strikes chords on piano.*)

FLORA (*Aside, in natural voice*)—Oh, you do? (*To him*) Sure. Once you're married, the kibosh is on the shows, lights, music, and the whole merry-merry works. It'll be you for the slippers and fire-side gag. You won't be in on the first nights and the lobster palaces. You won't see the girls dance—Say, did you ever see me dance? Well, just you strike up some hasty music and I'll make Loie Fuller look like a cripple.

(*Introduction of dance by FLORA. At conclusion JACK makes a rush at FLORA, with idea of kissing her, but she evades him.*)

FLORA (*Placing table between them*)—Now, don't you make any fool breaks on that hug propo-

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sition. These hurry lovers don't always get results. I've seen guys that would make love to beat the band cut out by a slow boy whose work was polished.

JACK—Just one kiss. You have bewitched me.

FLORA—Well, stay that way. As soon as you kissed me you'd come to. Say, bo, I didn't dope you out for such a cheap guy that you thought a quart of wine entitled you to everything.

(*BOY enters with tray and lunch—L. 1.*)

BOY—Here's the lunch, sir.

JACK—Put it on the table.

BOY (*Placing tray on table*)—Yes, sir. Did you forget something?

JACK (*Giving him coin*)—On your way. (*Boy exit L.*)

FLORA (*Grabbing chair and placing it at table*)—They're off! Say, party, you'll be left at the post if you don't start in on the food supply. (*Takes napkin and tucks it carefully about her chin.*) Great, ain't it? Overlooked the fried onions, but at that I guess I won't starve to death. (*Takes knife and heaps it full, then puts it in mouth.*) Say, what's wrong with the bubbles? Might as well touch off the fireworks now.

JACK (*Who has watched her in disgust*)—Do you always eat with your knife?

FLORA—Sure—it's better than fingers. Remember, I'm a lady.

JACK (*Rises, opens wine, and fills both glasses; then picks one up and holds it aloft*)—Here's to

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you. "Drink to me only with thine eyes." (*Introduces song.*)

FLORA (*After song*)—Here's to you, bright eyes. (*Picks up her glass, pretends to drink, but throws wine in bucket; then she reaches over, gets his glass and repeats business.*) Here's looking at you again. You got a bully voice, kid! Know anything else? (*Takes another large mouthful.*)

JACK (*Sadly*)—Yes, I know I've made a mistake. Do you know, Miss Twinkletoes, that your manners are simply atrocious? (*Pulls out cigarette case.*)

FLORA—Say, kid, forget it. Gimme a cigarette.

JACK—No, I won't. I don't allow women to smoke in my apartments. I want you to finish up that stuff and leave. I'll ring up Bill and have him call for you. (*Starts for phone.*)

FLORA (*Dropping chorus girl voice and manner*)—Oh, please don't do that! Please don't!

JACK (*Turning in surprise*)—Why, what does this mean?

FLORA—It means that I have been imposing on you. That I am not Miss Tottie Twinkletoes at all.

JACK—Then who in thunder are you?

FLORA—I am Miss Flora Mason and I'm looking for Mr. Jack Windsor. I intended to surprise him, but I've evidently gotten into the wrong apartment. (*Tearfully, and looking about nervously.*)

JACK (*Aside*)—She doesn't know me. I'll have a little fun with her. (*To her*) What kind of a looking chap is this Windsor?

FLORA—He's tall and handsome, with the carriage of a gentleman. Why, he's a veritable Greek god.

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I love tall men. (*Looking at JACK from head to foot*) Short men do not impress me at all.

JACK (*Aside*)—Kind of a hot shot! (*To her*) How long since you saw this—this Apollo?

FLORA—Eight years—but I'm sure I'd know him anywhere.

JACK (*Throwing out chest and rising to full height*)—Then look at him. I'm Jack Windsor!

FLORA—Jack Windsor? You? (*Laughs.*) Why, my Jack is a gentleman. My Jack wouldn't entertain a chorus girl or try to steal a kiss.

JACK—Well, I didn't think that *my* Flora would drink champagne, do a skirt dance, or eat with her knife, either.

FLORA (*Hangs head*)—I'm afraid I've been a very bad girl. (*Eagerly*) But did I do a chorus girl well?

JACK—Flora, you were a Jim-dandy—true to life, too!

FLORA—Why, Jack, how do you know?

JACK (*Stammering*)—Why—oh, why, I've read about them, you know—just read about 'em!

FLORA (*Mollified*)—Oh, I see! But I'm awfully glad you like my acting, because I'm going to do an imitation of Rose Stahl to-morrow night at the Artists' Club, and I got good old Bill to fix it up so I could surprise you. So you see we've just both been playing.

JACK—Yes, and perhaps not according to Hoyle, either; because for the first time on record the *Jack* is going to take the *Queen*. (*Takes her in his arms.*)

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